

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DPW-01 USIE-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3829

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

DELIVER ACTION OFFICERS OPENING OF BUSINESS MARCH 19

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: PRESS STORY ON GVN "DEAL" TO GIVE UP HIGHLANDS

REF : STATE 060733

1. THE UPI STORY OF A "DEAL" HAS NO BASIS IN FACT AND IS COMPLETELY UNTRUE. IT APPEARS TO US THAT UPI MAY HAVE PICKED UP A DELIBERATE FABRICATION INTENDED TO CREATE CONFUSION AND DISSENT. THE GVN PRESS SPOKESMAN HAS FLATLY DENIED THE UPI STORY.

2. THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION IN THE HIGHLANDS IS THE RESULT OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY OFFENSIVE NOT ONLY IN THE HIGHLANDS BUT ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY AND THE MEASURES THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM CONSIDERED NECESSARY TO TAKE IN LIGHT OF THAT FACT IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF ITS FORCES AND PROVIDE FOR THE MOST EFFECTIVE DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY POSSIBLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. IN THE HIGHLANDS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE OFFENSIVE IS BEING CARRIED OUT BY A FORCE EQUIVALENT TO MORE THAN FOUR NORTH VIETNAMESE DIVISIONS HEAVILY SUPPORTED BY TANKS,
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HEAVY ARTILLERY AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS.

3. THERE ARE SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND REFUGEES, BOTH VIETNAMESE AND ETHNIC MONTAGNARDS, NOW FLEEING FROM THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS TOWARD THE COAST BY ANY ROUTE OPEN TO THEM IN ANOTHER MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION THAT THE PEOPLE OF VIETNAM SIMPLY DO NOT WANT TO LIVE UNDER COMMUNIST RULE. BUT, THE ASSERTION IN THE STORY THAT THE COMMUNIST ORDERED OUT POPULATION ON "GUARANTEED" FREE PASSAGE TO THESE REFUGEES IS LUDICROUS. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE SUPPORTED BY A FEW REMAINING VIET CONG HAVE ALWAYS HAD IT AS A PRIMARY OBJECTIVE TO GAIN CONTROL OVER POPULATION RATHER THAN REMOTE JUNGLE TERRITORY. TO THIS END THEY ALWAYS HAVE ATTEMPTED BY ALL MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM LEAVING AREAS UNDER THEIR CONTROL. THEY CONTINUE TO DO SO AND TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY CAN ARE ATTEMPTING TO STOP PEOPLE FROM FLEEING THE HIGHLANDS AT THIS TIME.

4. ANOTHER COMPLETELY FALSE ASSERTION IN THIS STORY IS THAT THE US WAS ALLEGEDLY INFORMED OF THE "DEAL" SUPPOSEDLY MADE BY PRESIDENT THIEU ON SUNDAY AND SUBSEQUENTLY MOVED ALL AMERICANS OUT OF THE HIGHLANDS BY MONDAY. THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT THE EMBASSY AND CONGEN NHA TRANG, ON BASIS OF ITS OWN ASSESSMENT OF THE MILITARY SITUATION IN KONTUM AND PLEIKU PROVINCES, REACHED A DECISION TO EVACUATE AMERICANS FROM THOSE AREAS ON THE MORNING OF SATURDAY, MARCH 15, AND THE MOVEMENT HAD BEEN COMPLETED BY THE SAME EVENING.

5. RECOMMEND THAT ABOVE BE USED BY DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN AT WEDNESDAY BRIEFING.
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